

Little Kenneth's Text.

Our Kenneth went to Sunday School
 One pleasant day. He was but three,
 But in his brand new hat and coat,
 He felt just like a man, you see.
 His little text he learned so well,
 That grandma heard it with delight,
 Kissing his rosy cheeks, she said,
 "Now, you'll be sure to say it right."
 Among the troops of little ones,
 That round the teacher's smiling face
 Were filling every vacant chair,
 He quite demurely found a place.
 And now, what do you think he said,
 When asked if he his lessons knew?
 "Honor my papa and mamma,
 And honor my nice grandma too."
 —MARION RYBURN.

Hindrances to Religious Advancement.

Man is naturally a worshipper. There is always something which is the object of his adoration, either sensibly or otherwise. All people worship something. This is so true as to need no argument. He worships a god of some kind. It may be a creature of his manual or his mental creation, but it is a supreme being. The most intelligent infidels, while denying the Christian religion, accept a God of nature. Thomas Payne says: "I believe in the existence of a God and I hope for happiness in a future state." And yet this man makes the worst brutal attacks on the Bible.

Why is it that all men can not accept the Christian religion? It is the best religion the world has ever seen. It is the best code of morals which can be formulated. It is the soundest system of philosophy which can be imagined. For instance: A man wants a certain thing, whatever it may be. He prays earnestly for it and gets it, and is happy; or he prays earnestly and does not get what he wants, and is still happy, feeling that an all-wise God orders it otherwise. To illustrate: Christ prayed earnestly in Gethsemane, and for a certain thing. While praying, he expressed his willingness to abide the decision of Almighty God, and the angel appeared, strengthening him.

Thank God for a religion which will give strength to be happy when we don't get what we want. Thank God for a God who has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." I know of no other system which, if followed out in its entirety, will keep a man or woman *always* happy and contented. If a Christian be unhappy for any great length of time, the fault is with the individual and not with God, and I would recommend to such a one to pray as Christ did when he knew the terrible trial which was just ahead of him.

In the formation of the Holy Trinity it is better far than any other system. We have a God whom we can worship as such and love as a Father. We have an elder Brother who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmity and who has been over our path, who was tempted in all things even as we are. Did you ever think of this, my brother and my sister? Whenever you have any trouble or temptation you can take it to your Saviour, knowing that he can feel for you and has been tempted in the very same way, no matter what it may be.

Thank God last and best, in this system we have a guide. Christ has said he will send his Spirit to guide us in the way of all truth. The Holy Spirit to guide us (and I believe he will do it always if we will allow him), the Son to feel for us and intercede for us, the Father to love us and send his angels to strengthen us when we call on him, truly form a Holy Trinity, a God-head such as no other system of worship can offer. Such being the case, why is it that there are so many infidels and agnostics and so many who will not come into the churches? In a hurried way I shall try to give some of the answers to this question.

1st. *It is presented too often in a false light.* The plan of salvation is narrowed down to a religion of rites and ceremonies, thus taking away the true beauty of it and making of it only a Jewish practice. This may sound harsh or rude, but I invite for it the closest scrutiny. The man who pins his hope of salvation to his observance of church ordinances is simply a Jew. A Christian Jew it may be, but still a Jew to all intents and purposes. The religion of Christ and that of the Jews are as

different as it is possible for two things having the same object in view to be. The one is a religion based on the strictest observance of laws laid down so plainly as to exclude any chance for an individual opinion as to their meaning. The veriest tyro can know at a glance how every ceremony (ordinance) was to be performed. That of Christ is essentially a spiritual religion. Take away the spirit from the writings of Paul, for instance, and he is only the Jew on his way to Damascus. I believe, and there is abundant evidence of basis for such belief all through the scriptures, that in Christ's religion the spiritual takes precedence over the merely formal. Space would not permit to argue this extensively, but the truth of it will be forced upon any one who will investigate for himself. It is this giving precedence to the letter over the spirit that I claim is putting the religion of Christ in a wrong light.

2nd. Another hindering cause is the intense sectarianism abroad over the land. Each particular body of Christians claims to be a little nearest the kingdom and with the club of controversy wants to set these brethren (who are as firm believers in Jesus Christ as themselves) right. Instead of taking the sword of the spirit and attacking the devil wherever he may be found. Can we not, while traveling along, ask a man simply whether he has been cleansed by the blood of Christ and not what church he belongs to? We want primitive religion. Let us get back to it. Do not stop when you find that a brother does not follow us in some point on which we lay great stress. Let us remember what Jesus said to John when the latter told how they forbade the good man because he followed not us. "Forbid him not," Christ says. Let him alone. He is doing a good work. I believe as much as any man can in the necessity for ceremonies of various kinds, but I don't believe in a man talking trine immersion in every sermon. And right here let me say a word with regard especially to our Conservative brethren. There is a disposition on the part of some to condemn the whole thing as a bad lot and doom them to the dogs altogether. This is not as it should be. There was an old prophet long ago who talked very much this way: He thought every one had left off doing good and was doing evil, and the Lord rebuked him and told him there was quite a goodly number who were still true and had not worshipped the false God. Within the last few months I myself have been rebuked while on my knees for this same spirit. In bitterness of heart I considered that no good thing could come out of them, and was rebuked to such an extent that I never want the thing repeated for the same offense. There are many good men and women amongst them. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that they are all bad, we must still let them alone. Christ says, "Except your righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees." We must get beyond picking at them. We must get over the old bitterness and hatred. Such things are not of God. "Charity endureth all things,"—all things—"Charity suffereth long and is kind." This is one of the great hindering causes. The world looks on and sees one set of Christians fighting another, and says there is nothing in this thing of religion. It is a notorious fact that the closer two denominations are to one another in doctrine, the more bitter will be the controversy. Let us get away from this, my brethren. Let us, by earnest prayer to God for guidance, get so far away as to make our sectarianism no longer a hindrance to the advancement of the cause of Christ.

A third hindering cause is that we as Christians do not aspire to as high a religious life as we should. We just get into the shallow water along the edge of the mighty stream of God's love and we have always to be on the alert lest our spiritual bark fouls on some of the scraggs and rubbish with which the devil has fringed the shore.

Launch out, my brother! Launch out, my sister! Get into the middle of the stream. Get where the current is so strong that it will sweep you right straight along. Get where the little eddies and side currents will not be felt. Where all is one great, wide, deep, sweeping channel of love to God and your fellowman. Leave off caring for

yourselves; leave off caring for things of this world; leave off everything which may keep you away from the full enjoyment of the supreme love of our Saviour. Stop saying the cross is heavy. Every time you say so you give Christ the lie. He has said: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." Your cross is heavy because you have a good-sized devil or two on one end of it. Shake them off! Pray them off! Do not rest until you have got up on the high plane of God's sunlight and love. Christ has said that nothing must separate our hearts and our service from him. Put your whole trust in him and he has promised to see you through. Trust him. Trust him. Leave off depending on yourselves. "Can the leopard change his spots?" He who made the leopard can do so. "Can any of you by taking thought add one cubit to his stature?" God Almighty can do so if you will let him. Get the devil out and Christ will come in and make a spiritual giant out of you. The fight is not to get Christ in but to get the devil out. Christ will come quickly and gladly enough if you get the devil out. He will do more. He will cast the devil out if you will come to him and ask him in the right way. The poor, sick woman, who had the long-standing issue of blood, found out the power of Christ when she came secretly and touched "but the hem of his garment." We may do as she did, but we cannot come with head up and shoulders back like the Pharisee telling what fine fellows we are and what good we do. Let us go secretly when no one knows it and by touching the hem of his garment "move the arm which moves the world," and be made spiritually whole. I have seen this anecdote: "A traveler was ascending a mountain. The way was rugged and steep; rocks, thorns and bushes beset the path. The progress was slow. When nearly up a storm came upon him. The poor traveler wanted to retrace his steps and go back down the mountain. The guide, however, encouraged him to push on and in a few minutes they were through the cloud and above the storm. This is a most excellent illustration. Get above the storm. Get on the mountain of God's love, where you can look down unmoved upon the thunders and lightnings of the world's storms. Get where it can not affect you, for your Guide has taken you above it. Let us go on to perfection, my brethren. Let us aspire to a high spiritual life and we will get it. God wants us to have it. The Son wants us to have it. The Holy Ghost is striving to give it to us. We who are converted can resist the "Spirit" as much as the unconverted. We can refuse to be led and refuse to come up to where the Father would have us and thus resist as strongly as those who are unconverted. Let us remove this hindering cause. Let us get with God and those around will know it. When Moses had been with the Lord his face became so radiant that it had to be veiled, though seemingly when Moses came down out of the mountain he was not aware that there was anything unusual in his appearance.

As we get nearer to God and further from the world, the latter will see the improvement in us and more will be constrained to fall in and see what sort of a leader Jesus is. Try it my brethren. Do not condemn before you try it. Do not say these are hindering causes until you have investigated them and talked with sinners and infidels and found their reasons for staying away. Read the infidel literature and find what are the severest blows they strike Christians, and you will see that most of them will be covered by these three headings. May God help us all to remove the hindering causes from ourselves that we may be able to bring sinners to Christ.

V. M. REICHARD.

Fairplay, Md.

More than half the charges in Iowa Classes are under our Board of Missions.

AN ODD PREACHING PLACE.

Rev. F. W. Stump, of Redfield, Dakota, lately organized a little congregation near his home, and they worship in the waiting-room of railroad station; an odd place, but far better than the caves and other secret places in which some of our persecuted Protestant forefathers of Europe used to worship.